

NR Individ. 1990

FORM B - BUILDING

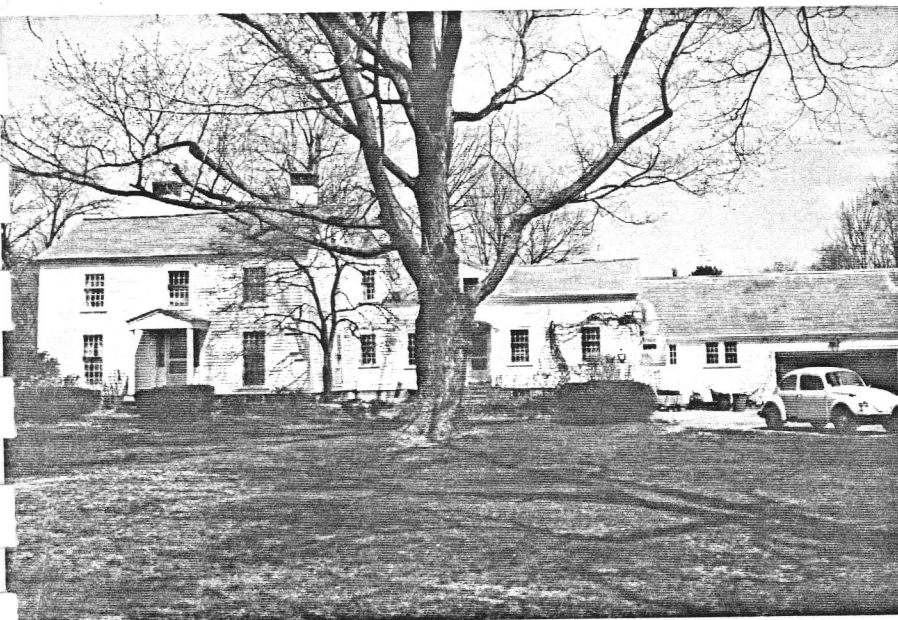
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

D, AB

Form no.

129

n Lexingtonress 1303 Mass Ave

Mason House

sent use Dwellingsent owner James Weber

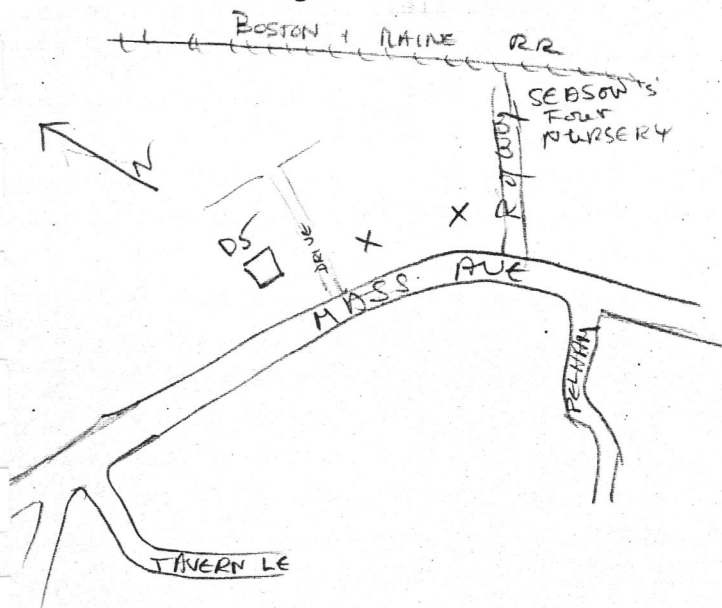
ription:

1698

ource

Colonial - 5 bay center entrance

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Architect

Exterior wall fabric White Clapboard

Green shutters

Outbuildings (describe) Garage on s. sideOther features Windows 3 over 2 - Window panes 8 over 12, side lights on front center door2 ~~central~~ chimneys (?)Altered yes Date

Moved Date

5. Lot size: (3.75A)

Less than one acre Over one acre XApproximate frontage 95ftApproximate distance of building from street
26ft6. Recorded by Connie Bachman

Organization

Date July 22, 1975DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant

MHC Photo no.

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) c 1698 - John Mason

Original use farmhouse

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science/	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	settlement	<input type="checkbox"/>	invention	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humanitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Historical Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

John Mason, tanner, assessor in Lexington, one of eleven subscribers in purchase of the Green from Benjamin Muzzey 1711 when town was incorporated, constable (1714), Town Clerk (1729) & later lates & selectman. Area around house became known as Mason's Hollow. Grandsons Joseph & Daniel Mason fought in Capt. Parker's company of Minutemen in 1775, Joseph became Town Clerk (1770-1790). Daniel, more accentric became town character. Sarah Mason (aunt to Joseph & Daniel) Wm. Munroe, Mother of Col. Wm. Munroe (cf Munroe Tavern, D-4). In 1789 house passed out of Mason family to Samuel Henley (1780-1791) to James Winthrop (1791-1822), Harvard graduate, noted astronomer, Registrar of Probate for Middlesex Co. Librarian of Harvard, Judge of Court of Common Pleas, & excessive drinker. He raised mulberry trees for his silkworms, d. 1821. House then passed to James Munroe, owner of Munroe Tavern. In Munroe family to 1920.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Canavan Papers - Lexington Library
Hudson, Charles - History of Lexington
Proceedings, Lexington Historical Society

Unpublished paper by Joan Weber (Mrs. James Weber) for Lexington Bicentennial Photographic Exhibit, 1975, in Lex. Library, & Lex. Hist. Soc.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Photos

- 13:3 east chamber
- 13:7 detail, summer beam and end girt, west chamber
- 13:9 south facade
- 14:26 attic

CHD-6/11/56-129
NRIND-3/9/90 (1L)
NRTRA 3/9/90

102

ED: AS 129

Town LexingtonAddress 1303 Massachusetts Ave.Historic Name John Mason HouseUse: Present ResidenceOriginal Residence

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1715Source visual analysisStyle 1st Period core/Federal vernacular exteriorArchitect UnknownExterior Wall Fabric ClapboardsOutbuildings None

Major Alterations (with dates) Lean-to added, its roof raised, ell addition to the right side, extended several times, dates unknown

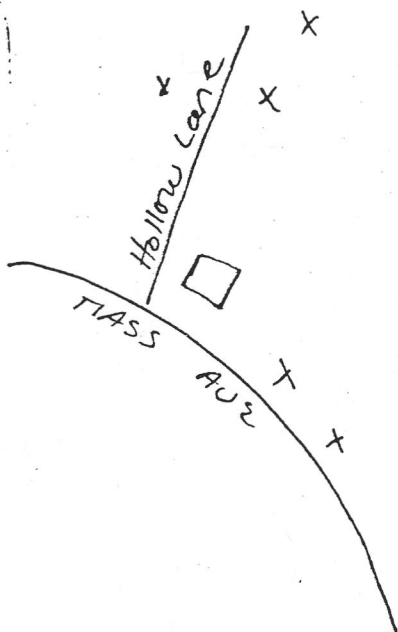
Condition Good

Moved No Date N/AAcreage 3.7 acres

Setting Suburban setting of well-spaced houses; open land of Seasons Four greenhouse and great meadow to the rear - condos to the west

Recorded by Anne GradyOrganization Boston UniversityDate October 1985

Sketch Map:

ITM REFERENCE 19 / 317-830 / 4700-930USGS QUADRANGLE LexingtonSCALE 1:25,000

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

LEXINGTON

Form No:

129

Property Name: John Mason House

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

SIGNIFICANCE

The John Mason House has integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship in its later First Period frame which embodies distinctive characteristics of form and construction eligible under Criterion C. The Mason House is one of four early 18th century houses in Lexington with quirk-beaded frames. In this house and in the Buckman Tavern (c. 1709), the bead is exceptionally wide at one inch.

The Mason house may be part of a transitional pattern noted in other houses surveyed, where horizontal beams are quirk-beaded, but vertical posts are meagrely chamfered, or plain, perhaps because the posts were intended to be boxed from the beginning.

The Mason house has an all principal rafter roof, a late First Period framing variant found primarily in Middlesex County. At least one other house surveyed with principal rafter roof also has the relatively rare longitudinal summer beams on the second floor. Further study of framing techniques in these Middlesex County houses with principal rafter roofs is likely to yield important information about the origins and rationale behind these rare framing alternatives.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The John Mason house is a two and one half story structure with two story lean-to in the rear and a long ell, added in several building campaigns to the right-hand end. The original house, (the front left-hand portion of the current house,) is a structure of modest scale, three bays wide and one bay deep, asymmetrical in plan.

The clapboarded structure has Greek Revival vernacular exterior trim, a 20th century open porch at the center entrance, and two chimneys on the rear slope. The chimneys replaced an earlier central chimney in the early 19th century.

MAJOR FIRST PERIOD FEATURES

Evidence of First Period construction is found in the southeast room and in the southeast and southwest chambers.

In the southeast room, only the east end girt is exposed. It has an inch-wide quirked bead.

In the southeast and southwest chambers, the front and rear plates, the end and chimney girts and the longitudinal summer beams are all decorated with an inch wide quirked bead. Posts exposed in the rooms are boxed, but in a closet, one flared post displays a flat chamfer.

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In the attic, the roof framing is composed of thirteen sawn principal rafters approximately 3 1/2 inches square, spaced 32 to 35 inches apart. The rafters are bridle jointed and pegged at the ridge. There is no ridge piece, and no purlins. The feet of the rafters above the four tie beams (two end tie beams and only two intermediate tie beams flanking the central bay) are framed into the tie beams. How other rafters are attached to the plates was not determined.

Rafters at the center of the rear slope are slightly different in character, suggesting that they may have been installed after the central chimney was removed and replaced by rear chimneys.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

John Mason owned the site of this house by 1706, but the deed was not recorded until 1714, a likely time, on the basis of style, for this house to have been built. John Mason was a prominent early citizen of Lexington, which until 1713 was called Cambridge Farms. He served as constable, town clerk and selectman at various times in the early years of the town's history.

REFERENCES

Joan Webber, Study of the John Mason House, unpublished paper, Lexington Historical Society.